

INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority to provide the public a confidential mechanism with which they can relate problems they have encountered with our services and to use the information received from the public through that mechanism to develop new programs, procedures and initiatives which improve the delivery of service. In addition, it is the policy of the Transit Authority that every valid complaint or other communication from a member of the public be answered in a courteous, helpful and timely manner. All employees who have contact with the public will exhibit genuine concern and a desire to help solve any problems which are relayed to them. All employees will keep in mind that complainants are not adversaries. Rather, they are individuals in need of our assistance. The resolution of their complaint will assist us in providing better service for all riders and advancing the mission of the Transit Authority. To meet this policy, we will:

- Provide the public with easy access to a Customer Service Representative during normal business hours.
- Record and summarize all complaints in a database and review the information periodically to identify patterns of customer complaints.
- Ensure that complainants know that we have understood their complaint and will act on the information they provided in a prompt and fair manner commensurate with our roles as public servants.
- Ensure that the complaints are forwarded to the department best suited to respond and that a thorough investigation is made.
- Ensure that every complaint is resolved in a timely fashion in no more than 5 working days.
- Where deemed appropriate, complementary fare media may be provided to complainants as a form of expression of the Transit Authority's regret at the complainant having had a less-than-positive experience with our system.

PROCEDURES

The attached flow diagram (**Attachment 1: Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority Customer Complaint Resolution Process**) depicts the complaint resolution process from the point of the incoming communication of a complaint to its closure. The steps are detailed below.

Intake of Complaint – Complaints can be received in many ways. We are currently receiving complaints over the telephone and by letter and, in some cases, by complainants coming in person to complain. In the future, complaints may be received through other mechanisms. The Transit Authority periodically distributes customer service surveys at the Terminal and on buses. These surveys have an area for a rider to provide details of complaints or complements. In addition, complaints may arrive through our website.

Callers will be provided with a direct number to dial to reach a Customer Service Representative. All callers with complaints who reach other GBTA departments should be politely forwarded to the Customer Service Department. A numbered Passenger Report form will be filled-out (**Attachment 2: Passenger Report Form**). Every effort should be made to prevent a caller from being bounced from voice mail to voice mail and they should never be asked to call a different number. In the absence of the Customer Service Representative, complaints will also be taken by:

- Planning and Service Development Officer
- Director of Customer Relations & Service Development
- Superintendent of Transportation
- Receptionist/Secretary

The Passenger Report Form is to be filled out completely. The form has a space for the rider's telephone number and address. It is important, for at least two reasons, that this information be collected wherever possible. First, the Transit Authority would like to follow-up with the

caller to ensure that their needs have been met. Secondly, depending on the seriousness of the complaint, the Transit Authority should have a contact in the event additional details are needed as the complaint progresses through the investigatory process. Many individuals will be resistant to giving this information for fear of retaliation. They should be assured that the Customer Service Staff will maintain such information provided as confidential, that it is solely to be able to make future contact for additional information and that it will not be distributed beyond the Customer Service Department.

NOTE: Emergency Situations

On occasion, the Transit Authority may receive complaints of an urgent nature. These would include reports of eminent danger, criminal activity and instances where the Transit Authority is exposed to continued liability. Examples of emergency complaints requiring immediate attention would include:

- *Report of an employee operating a Transit Authority vehicle erratically or under the influence of drugs which impair judgment, or alcohol*
- *Reports of Criminal Activity*
- *Reports of Injuries/Accidents*
- *Reports of any activity or circumstance involving Transit Authority property, employees or facilities which pose a threat to life or property.*

Under these circumstances, the Complaint should be forwarded directly to the Operations Officer. In the absence of that party, the complaint or report should be forwarded to any Transit Authority Officer. For all other complaints, please follow the procedures below.

Review by Customer Service Department (Same Day) – Once a complaint has been received, it should be forwarded directly to the Customer Service Department. At this point the following will occur:

- The complaint details will be entered into a database, along with their assigned number.
- A letter will be sent to the Complainant acknowledging receipt of their complaint and notifying them that it is being investigated (**Attachment 3: Customer Response Letter**)
- The Complainant's name will be removed from all copies of the Complaint Form which leave the Customer Service Department and, at that point, will be forwarded to the relevant Department for their investigation of it.

Immediate Response – Immediate responses are ones which the complaint-taker can resolve and answer immediately. It is the responsibility of the call-taker to check with the Dispatcher on duty to try to resolve the problem when practical. This is the preferred method of handling a complaint when possible. Examples of immediate response complaints include, but are not limited to:

- **Bus No-Show or Late Due to Traffic Conditions or Accident** - The bus did not arrive due to breakdown, accident or detour. In this case, the circumstances behind the incident should be explained with an apology for the inconvenience it has caused.
- **Misinformed Passenger** – Call-taker should give correct information and/or mail rider up-to-date materials

No Investigation Complaints – These are complaints where sufficient contact information is not available, or where sufficient information to properly investigate a complaint is not provided. The data will be entered onto the customer service database to provide an accurate picture of service quality and forwarded to the appropriate department for their information and review. No formal investigation will be required in such cases and departments need not report back to customer service with any follow-up.

Formal Complaints – These are specific complaints about the service or personnel in which the rider is willing to validate the complaint by giving his/her name, address and/or telephone number. This information is to be kept confidential.

Forwarding (Same Day) – All formal complaints about a recurring problem, or a possible safety problem, will be forwarded to the appropriate department. Customer service staff members will investigate the nature of the complaint and make a determination regarding whether the complaint should go to the Planning Department or the Operations Department. The Planning Department will typically receive complaints regarding schedules, shelters, service changes, bus stops and the like, while the Operations Department will receive complaints about on-time performance, equipment, safety, or vehicle maintenance. There will likely be numerous occasions where a complaint is forwarded to both departments. Copies of all formal complaints will be forwarded to Union Leadership.

Post-Complaint Discipline – It is not the within the scope of the Customer Service Department to take disciplinary action against employees because of information garnered from complaints, nor is it in the Department's scope to make recommendations for disciplinary action to be taken as a result a complaint. Rather, it is up to the respective Department Heads to determine whether or not information conveyed in a complaint about an employee of theirs constitutes a disciplinary offense. It is also up to individual Department Heads to use whatever avenues of discovery are reasonably available to them to ascertain the validity of a complaint regarding one of their employees and to properly apply whatever disciplinary codes are applicable to any offense which, in their judgment, has been, or is being, committed.

Non-Disciplinary Notice to Operators and Other Staff (within 5 business days) – The Transit Authority has concluded that it is not always possible to know exactly what occurred in each incident that is reported and, in many cases, follow-up fieldwork will be unlikely to clarify the incident. In addition, under Article 19 Section D of the Consolidated Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Transit Authority may not discipline a represented employee without first having a meeting with the Complainant and the Union's Business Agent. However, while not all complaints will lead to disciplinary action, the Transit Authority does want all staff members to know when a complaint involving them has been filed and will notify staff members in writing in such instances within 5 business days of a complaint's receipt. A copy of a sample memorandum is included as Attachment 4.

Closure - Reporting Back to Customer Service Department (within 5 days) – After the complaint or incident has been investigated, the department handling the complaint will report, in writing, their findings and any resolution of the matter to the Customer Service Department.

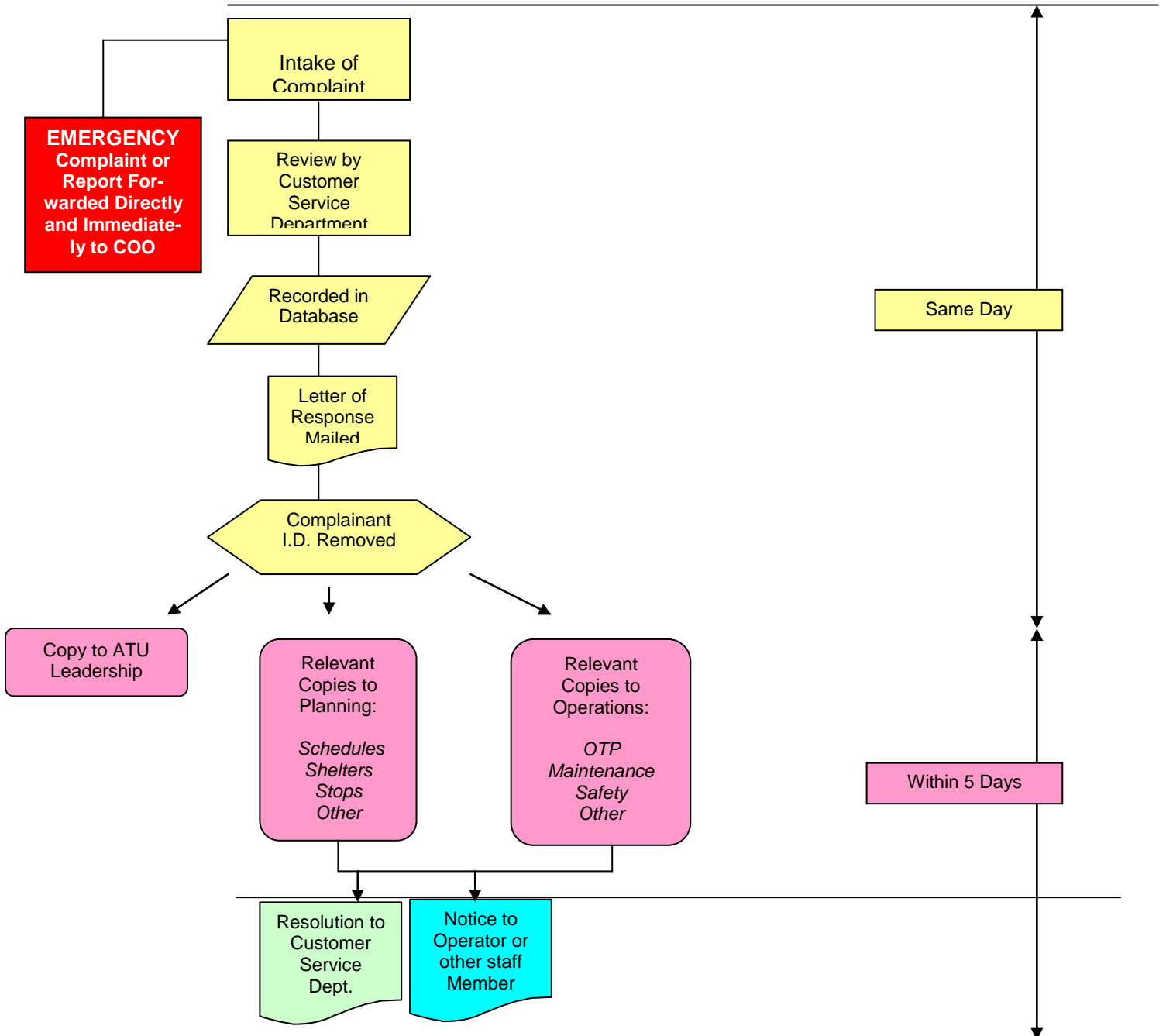
Review of Database (Periodic) – The maintenance of a database containing all complaint details (date, location, route, etc.) will allow for periodic review and analysis of that information and will likely highlight problem areas. This analysis will be conducted monthly, quarterly and annually with the results from prior periods compared. This information will be shared with all departments in hard-copy form. Special reviews or queries may also be conducted at the request of a staff person. This database will have any personal information about complainants blocked out. It will not be made available over the network. Patterns recognized in the evaluation of complaints will be forwarded to the Operations Department for investigation and confirmation.

Other Rider Input

- **Commendation** – These items should be processed on the Customer Report Form and forwarded to the appropriate department
- **Suggestions** – These items should be processed on the Customer Report Form and forwarded to the appropriate department
- **Surveys, Letters or E-Mails** – These items should be attached to the Customer Report Form and processed.

Accident or injury complaints/reports will be forwarded immediately to the Safety/Risk Management Department, which will further forward them to the appropriate parties in their normal course of business.

Attachment 1: Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority Customer Complaint Resolution Process



Attachment 3: Customer Response Letter

Date

Dear Rider,

Thank you for contacting us regarding the problem you experienced with our service. Please accept my apology for any inconvenience it has caused you.

I assure you that our staff is looking into the matter and will contact you for additional information if necessary.

We are working hard to improve our service and meet the needs of the public. Part of this effort is listening to what people like yourself have to say. Your input is helpful and will be addressed.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact us. I'm sure you will notice our ongoing efforts to improve.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Kilcoyne, CEO

Attachment 4: Staff Complaint Notification Letter

MEMO TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

This memorandum is to inform you that a complaint involving you was filed with the Transit Authority on _____. For your information, a copy of the complaint form is attached. This information has been recorded in the our database but the complaint has not been made part of your permanent record. We are not taking any action at this time and you do not need to respond.

We understand that you are working hard to deliver quality service and we would like to help in any way possible. If you would like to talk about this complaint or if there is anything you need assistance with at this time, please see me.